

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /067 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 4211

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, EGEN, GH
SUBJ: GOVERNMENT MOVES TO QUASH RUMOR-MONGERS AND COUP PLOTTERS

1. SUMMARY: GOG HAS ATTACKED RUMOR-MONGERS, FROZEN THE ASSETS OF TWO COUP PLOTTERS AND ARRESTED THE GHANA NEWS AGENCY GENERAL MANAGER. MOVES ARE SYMPTOMATIC OF ITS GROWING INSECURITY. FURTHER STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS ARE POSSIBLE FOLLOWING DEATH OF INJURED STUDENT. END SUMMARY.
2. RUMOR-MONGERING IS NOW PUNISHABLE BY A FIVE-TO-TEN YEAR PRISON TERM, ACCORDING TO DECREE PUBLISHED BY GOG JUNE 2. DOCUMENT PROVIDES THAT ANY PERSON, WHO WITH INTENT TO BRING HEAD OF STATE OR SENIOR MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT INTO HATRED, RIDICULE OR CONTEMPT, PUBLISHES ANY DEFAMATORY OR INSULTING MATTER BY WRITING, PRINT OR WORD OF MOUTH SHALL BE GUILTY OF THIS OFFENSE.
3. GHANAIAAN TIMES JUNE 3 REPORTS GOG HAS FROZEN ASSETS AND BANK ACCOUNTS OF COL. GEORGE MINYILA, ACTING COMMANDER OF SUPPORT SERVICES OF GHANA ARMY, AND OF ATTOW QUARSHIE, A BUSINESSMAN. ASSETS AND ACCOUNTS OF THEIR WIVES WERE ALSO FROZEN. MINYILA AND QUARSHIE WERE IMPLICATED IN COUP PLOT BROKEN UP MAY 21; WE UNDERSTAND THEY HAVE BEEN UNDER ARREST SINCE THEN. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT GHANA NEWS AGENCY GENERAL MANAGER K.B. BROWN HAS BEEN ARRESTED BUT HAS NOT BEEN CHARGED. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE
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HE WAS ENGAGED IN COUP PLOTTING.

4. A STUDENT, INJURED IN MAY 13 DEMONSTRATIONS, DIED IN KUMASI EARLIER THIS WEEK. A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR HIM MAY WELL BE FOCUS OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS THERE AND IN CAPE COAST AS WELL, WHERE HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG IS SCHEDULED TO ADDRESS INTERNATIONAL COCOA DAY CELEBRATION JUNE 4. STUDENTS IN KUMASI

AND PROBABLY IN CAPE COAST AND ACCRA ARE SAID TO BE
EMBITTERED BY DEATH AND ARE SEEKING CONFRONTATION WITH POLICE.

5. COMMENT: RUMOR-MONGERING DECREE IS ALMOST CERTAINLY A TACTICAL
ERROR ON GOG'S PART AND CLEARLY A SIGN OF WEAKNESS AND UNCER-
TAINTY. WHEN GHANAIS DISCUSSED IT WITH POL OFF EVENING OF JUNE
2, MOVE WAS GREETED WITH RIDICULE AND SCORN. ONE LAWYER BEGAN TO
CRITICIZE REGIME BUT LOUDLY BROKE OFF IN MID-SENTENCE WITH
SARCASTIC COMMENT THAT "BUT WAIT... WE MUST NOT BE SPREADING
RUMORS*" WE DOUBT DECREE WILL BE IMPLEMENTED RIGOROUSLY BUT
IT WILL PROVIDE GOG WITH ANOTHER ARROW IN ITS ANTI-DISSENT QUIVER.

6. GOG HAS NOT PUBLICIZED ARRESTS OF MINYILA, QUARSHIE OR
BROWN AND IS UNLIKELY TO DO SO, HOWEVER, WORD TRAVELS FAST BY
GRAPEVINE AND DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY AND GHANAIAAN ELITE
MUST KNOW STORY BY NOW. TIMES FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE ON FREEZING
OF ASSETS SIMPLY STATED THIS STEP HAD BEEN TAKEN BUT DID NOT
EXPLANIN WHY.

7. DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT HERE AND OUR GHANAIAAN FRIENDS CONTINUE TO
BUZZ WITH STORIES OF CORRUPTION, GOG BUNGLING, FOOD SHORTAGES
AND NEED FOR A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT. A MINORITY OPINION IS
BEGINNING TO ASSERT ITSELF, ARGUING THAT ACHEAMPONG WILL BE ABLE
TO RIDE OUT THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD AND WILL STAY IN THE SADDLE.
HOWEVER, MOST OBSERVERS, INCLUDING US, CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT
POLITICAL/ECONOMIC PROBLEMS HERE ARE SO ACUTE AND ARE BEING
HANDLED SO INEPTLY THAT ACHEAMPONG CANNOT SURVIVE MUCH LONGER.
SMITH

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Message Attributes

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